



UN Forum to consider forest-based solutions to improve people's lives and reduce poverty

The United Nations Forum on Forests will meet for its 12th session (UNFF12) from 1 to 5 May 2017 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting marks the first session of the Forum since the historic adoption of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 by the United Nations General Assembly on 27 April 2017. Discussions at UNFF12 will focus on technical issues related to sustainable forest management and strategies to promote implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The UN Strategic Plan for Forests was forged at a special session of the UN Forum on Forests held in January 2017 and provides an ambitious vision for global forests in 2030. The Plan features a set of six Global Forest Goals and 26 associated targets to be reached by 2030, which are voluntary and universal. One of the bold, groundbreaking aspects of the Strategic Plan is a target to expand the world's forests by 3%, an area of 120 million hectares, by 2030.

Forests presently cover 30 per cent of the Earth's land area, or nearly 4 billion hectares. Sustainably managed forests are healthy, productive, resilient and renewable ecosystems, which provide vital goods and ecosystem services to people worldwide. An estimated 25 per cent of the global population – 1.6 billion people – depend on forests for their subsistence, livelihood, employment and income.



The Global Forest Goals and targets aim to stimulate and provide a framework for voluntary actions, contributions and enhanced cooperation by countries, partners and stakeholders. They cover a wide range of issues including:

increasing forest area and combating climate change; reducing poverty and increasing forest protected areas; mobilizing financing and inspiring innovation; promoting governance and enhancing cooperation across sectors and stakeholders.

The key mission of the Strategic Plan is to promote sustainable forest management and promote the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including by strengthening cooperation and political commitment at all levels.

Discussions at UNFF12 will take into account the 2017 theme of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), “Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World” and the Sustainable Development Goals under in-depth review by the HLPF this year. In particular, the meeting will focus on four thematic priorities related to forests and the SDGs, namely Forests and Poverty Eradication (SDG1), Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls (SDG5), Forests and Food Security (SDG2), Means of Implementation for Sustainable Forest Management (SDGs 15.b and 17).

For millions of people living in poverty, forest and tree resources provide food, fuel for cooking and heating, water, medicine, shelter and clothing and function as safety nets in crises. Foods from forests including – leaves, seeds, nuts, fruits, mushrooms, insects and wild animals – provide nutrition, dietary diversity and health to millions of rural people. Forests also contribute significantly to rural food security and health as sources of wood fuel to cook food and sterilize water.

The Forum is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council and is composed of all Member States of the UN. Since its inception, the Forum has reached notable milestones including the adoption of the first UN Forest Instrument in 2007, the creation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in 2015 and most recently, the adoption in 2017 of the first UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017- 2030.

For more information: [United Nations Forum on Forests](#)



Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes poverty as the “greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.” To eradicate it, coordinated efforts must be undertaken to build on the

achievements realized so far and to prevent current and future challenges from jeopardizing further progress.

There are still over 800 million people living on less than \$1.90 a day, the international poverty line, and 10% of the world’s workers and their families are poor, a sign that access to a job is not enough to escape poverty. At the same time, inequality has been rising and can hinder progress in the fight against poverty.

Social policy alone cannot eradicate poverty, and neither can policies focusing only on the income aspect of poverty. As other policies have direct or indirect impacts on poverty results, poverty eradication objectives must be included in the design of public policy in a cross-cutting manner. Therefore, countries will need to adopt integrated policy frameworks involving a wider range of stakeholders, embracing innovative approaches and partnerships. This will also reinforce inclusiveness and transparency while fostering greater efficiency in policymaking.

As in the case at the national level, achieving policy coherence at all levels in development cooperation is also of vital importance, in order to catalyze other sources of financing and propel developing countries to unleash their enormous sustainable development potential. This entails meeting ODA commitments, as well as the mobilization of domestic and international resources, public and private, and technical cooperation support. It further requires increased coherence of the international monetary, financial and trade systems.

The 2017 ECOSOC Integration Segment will take place from 8 – 10 May 2017 at UN Headquarters in New York. It provides a platform for dialogue and exchange of views by Member States, the UN system, ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, and other relevant stakeholders – such as NGOs, academia and the private sector – on best practices and lessons learned in efforts to address poverty. Policy recommendations will be extracted to guide integrated policymaking for the eradication of poverty in all its dimensions as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda.

The proceedings and recommendations of the Segment will be available for consideration by Member States in the High-level Political Forum meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC, and the ECOSOC High-level Segment, to take place in July 2017. Its recommendations may be reflected in the Ministerial Declaration as the main outcome document at the culmination of the ECOSOC cycle.

HIGHLIGHTS



Advancing SDGs progress with science, technology and innovations

The Second Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for the Sustainable Development Goals, which is part of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, will take place in New York from 15 to 16 May 2017. This year's forum will explore the same set of SDGs as the 2017 High-level Political

Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), but with a focus on science, technology and innovation.

These goals are: SDG 1 on poverty eradication; SDG 2 on food security and sustainable agriculture; SDG 3 on health; SDG 5 on gender equality; SDG 9 on sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation; and SDG 14 on oceans.

This Forum will therefore stimulate discussions and exchanges around specific scientific insights, technology issues and innovations that are most crucial for progress in these SDG areas. In addition, cross-cutting issues and emerging developments that impact a range of SDGs will also be featured. In keeping with its multi-stakeholder format, participation will include policy makers, innovators, scientists, civil society participants and others.

“The Technology Facilitation Mechanism is unprecedented in several ways,” said UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo. “It is a global and multi-stakeholder mechanism; It serves both developed and developing countries alike; It allows pragmatic, in-depth discussions of technology issues; It aims to improve coherence of STI support and capacity building across the UN system and beyond.”

The STI Forum will also facilitate interaction, matchmaking and the establishment of networks between relevant stakeholders. In addition, there will be special events such as an exhibition for innovative technology solutions for the SDGs, a call for posters featuring the work of national scientific research laboratories, as well as an event on impact investing for scaling up STI.

A summary of the discussions at the Forum will serve as input to the meetings of the HLPF in the context of the follow-up and review of the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

For more information: [Second annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals](#)



Assessing progress to realize financing for development commitments

The second annual ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD Forum) will be convened from 22 to 25 May 2017. The FfD Forum was established by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to support the follow-up and review of FfD outcomes (Monterrey Consensus, Doha Declaration and Addis Agenda) and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This year's Forum will feature ministerial and expert segments. The ministerial segment, to be held on 22 and 23 May, will begin with the special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD. It will also feature, for the first time, ministerial round tables in response to the mandates contained in the Addis Agenda for the FfD follow-up process to promote the sharing of lessons learned from experiences at the national and regional levels.

The ministerial round tables will welcome ministers from developed and developing countries, high-level officials of international organizations and other stakeholders to dialogue and share the steps taken towards implementation of commitments contained in the Addis Agenda and other FfD outcomes.

The expert segment will take place from 24 to 25 May and will focus on all seven action areas of the Addis Agenda, and other issues as mandated by Member States. It will also feature a dedicated panel discussion on the IATF report, a dialogue with stakeholders, and a briefing on progress on initiatives mandated by the Addis Agenda.

Building on the broad participation of civil society and the business sector from the inaugural 2016 Forum, all stakeholders are encouraged to actively participate throughout the Forum. Registration is now open on the new [FfD website](#). Participation by civil society in the round tables and other segments of the Forum will be coordinated by the [CSO FfD Group](#). Likewise, the participation of the [business sector](#) in the Forum will be coordinated by the [FfD Business Steering Committee](#).

The coverage of the four-day meeting will be available on webcast, and on social media using #FFDForum.

For more information:

ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD Forum)
 Addis Ababa Action Agenda
 Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development
 Doha Declaration on Financing for Development



Innovations for infrastructure development and sustainable industrialization

On 31 May 2017, the President of ECOSOC will convene a special meeting to highlight the relevance of industry, innovation and infrastructure to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ahead of

this meeting, UN DESA Voice spoke with Navid Hanif, Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) in UN DESA, about the state of infrastructure development and sustainable industrialization around the world.

“Infrastructure development and sustainable industrialization are key drivers of growth. Industrialized countries benefit from diversified economic bases and lower costs of doing business. Emerging economies, including in Asia, are experiencing fast growth rates that are strongly correlated with industrialization and manufacturing.

Though there has been progress in the last two decades, developing countries as a group still lag behind in terms of infrastructure development. Road access rate in Africa is 34%, compared with 50% in other parts of the developing world, while transportation costs are 100% higher. More than 620 million people lack access to electricity. Only 5% of agriculture is under irrigation. Internet penetration rate is around 6%. In Africa, infrastructure deficits are estimated to cost 2% in GDP growth.

Economies are increasingly driven by innovations, including but not limited to, technological innovation. They increasingly emerge as solutions to problems on the ground and follow a bottom-up evolution at an increasing pace. Africa is not left behind in this trend. This means that governments and the international community need to create and reinforce favorable conditions to drive innovation, especially in the areas of skills training and partnerships.”

Where are we making progress and where do challenges remain?

“We need to make sure we capitalize on the opportunities generated by progress. Infrastructure has been responsible for more than half of Africa’s growth. The global community has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with bold yet achievable commitments. The COP 21 agreement is also now in place, and Africa has adopted Agenda 2063. Initiatives in support of infrastructure development are growing, including public-private partnerships, and the acceleration of urbanization and innovation is not only catalyzing growth in the areas of infrastructure and industrialization, but also strengthening the inter-linkages with all other aspects of development, such as food security or health.

However, for countries with lower capacities, this trend actually reinforces inequalities, lowers access to opportunities and creates a technological and spatial divide both between and within countries. Additionally, if we are to realize the climate commitments, new models of infrastructure must be developed.

Policy frameworks need to be stabilized as infrastructure development projects and programmes typically span 20 to 30 years. We must also enhance resilience, not only by building “green” infrastructure and stimulating green industrialization, but also by de-risking infrastructure investments to attract finance. At the same time, we need to boost domestic resource mobilization, including by curbing illicit financial flows.”

Why is it critical to develop these areas to achieve inclusive growth?

“This will bolster innovation and create new jobs in infrastructure and industrialization. For instance, every job in manufacturing creates 2.2 jobs in other sectors. Innovation, infrastructure development and industrialization, therefore, will support all other areas of the economy. Sustainable industrialization is also a response to many global crises so this represents an opportunity to strengthen regional integration as well as international cooperation.”

These challenges will take centre stage at the upcoming ECOSOC Special Meeting; what does the event hope to accomplish?

“Under the leadership of the ECOSOC President, two global meetings were held in Dakar and Victoria Falls. They gathered high-level representatives and experts from governments, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, international and regional organizations, as well as the United Nations system.

The meetings took stock of key trends and innovations for infrastructure development and sustainable industrialization, including in agriculture and agro-industries. These meetings were a space for knowledge sharing on best practices as well as common challenges and areas to leverage progress. The rich discussions provided numerous insights which will be brought forth at the Special Meeting in New York where concrete initiatives will be launched in order to accelerate progress.”

For more information: [2017 Special Meeting of ECOSOC](#)



Commission on Population and Development: Changing population age structures

Changing population age structures and sustainable development was at the center of the debate at the 50th session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD)

which took place at UN Headquarters in New York from 3-7 April 2017. Speakers at the event emphasized that the world's population had substantially increased in size and had seen dramatic shifts in its distribution by age and by place of residence since the first session of the CPD 70 years ago.

“When the Economic and Social Council created this Commission in 1946, the world's population looked very different from what we know today,” said Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of UN Secretary-General António Guterres on his behalf. “People today are living longer and healthier lives than ever before — among the greatest of humanity's achievements.”

Speakers noted that major shifts in population age structures were signs of success reflecting higher rates of survival from childhood to adulthood and longer life spans, and the greater ability of couples to choose the number and timing of any children they desire.

John Wilmoth, Director of UN DESA's Population Division, highlighted the policies Member States are already implementing to adapt to these changing demographic circumstances. “In ageing societies, social protection mechanisms, pension systems and health care programmes are being adjusted and strengthened,” Wilmoth said.

“Women's participation in the workforce is being supported more than ever before, and some countries are slowly pushing up the age of retirement. At the same time, there is an increasing recognition that international migration can help to rejuvenate populations and slow the rate of population ageing.”

Speakers highlighted the necessity of investing in the human capital of their populations, especially their youth through policies and programmes to improve youth's access to education, health, and employment. Attention was drawn to the reproductive health needs of youth, as well as to the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, child and early marriage, violence against youth and gender-based violence.

At the same time, countries detailed policies and programmes to address the health, welfare and inclusion of their rapidly growing older populations. Some Member

States highlighted that migration and refugee movements present unique challenges related to the changing population age distributions, the introduction of new cultural practices, and to labour markets.

Countries further stressed the importance of improving data and statistics for monitoring demographic trends and development, and the need for capacity development in this regard.

Participants included delegations from 46 elected members of the Commission and observers from about 80 other Member States, two non-Member States, and several intergovernmental organizations, United Nations regional commissions, and other entities. Roughly 160 representatives of more than 65 non-governmental organizations participated as well.

For more information: 50th Session of the Commission on Population and Development

MORE FROM UNDESA

Voluntary commitments on ocean action picking up pace in advance of June Conference



Be a part of ocean history!

Join the efforts to #SaveOurOcean by registering your commitment.
oceanconference.un.org/commitments



UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK,
5-9 JUNE 2017

#SaveOurOcean
oceanconference.un.org

A growing number of countries, businesses and civil society groups are stepping forward with new commitments to improve the health of the world's oceans in advance of The Ocean Conference that will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5-9 June.

“For too long, we have taken the Ocean for granted, without understanding the vital role it plays in our lives,” said the President of the UN General Assembly, Peter Thomson. “The voluntary commitments being made through the website of The Ocean Conference, from countries large and small, from agencies and civil society, register the good action being taken to restore and preserve the Ocean’s health.”

“We have seen a surge in new commitments to address the very real concerns that our oceans are facing,” said Wu Hongbo, Secretary-General of The Ocean Conference and Under-Secretary-General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “We hope the pace will pick up even further,” he added.

As of 26 April, a total of 87 voluntary commitments to support the implementation of SDG14 have been made at the Voluntary Commitments registry of the Ocean Conference at: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments>.

Commitment types

Among commitments to-date are projects to protect coral reefs and coastal zones in Grenada and Bali; a commitment to increase ocean conservation philanthropy, and Belgium’s commitment to prepare a national action plan to combat marine litter that will contain several cleaning activities such as the removal of fishing nets from ship wrecks and beach clean ups.

The leading nation in the number of voluntary commitments currently is Indonesia, with six, followed by Grenada, with five.

The leading entity type for submission of voluntary commitments is non-governmental organizations, with 30, followed by governments, with 16, and intergovernmental organizations with 7 and partnerships with 8.

The majority of voluntary commitments are global in nature—there are 51 so far, while the ocean basins with the most voluntary commitments are the South Pacific (22), the North Atlantic (20), and the North Pacific (17). Only two commitments (each) have been made that impact the Arctic and Southern Oceans. Of the 10 SDG14 targets, support for the sustainable management of marine ecosystems have garnered the most commitments, with 45, followed by marine pollution reduction with 40, and scientific knowledge, research capacity and technology transfer, with 39.

Stakeholders at all levels, from local civil society groups to UN member states to the largest private companies, are invited to submit their SDG14 voluntary commitments to the registry towards their official inclusion in the report of the Ocean Conference.

About the Conference

The Ocean Conference, to be held at UN Headquarters in NY from 5 to 9 June, aims to address and reverse the deterioration of the health of the ocean through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 14 calls for the conservation and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

For more information: [The Ocean Conference](#)

Apply now for the US\$ 1 Million UN DESA Energy Grant

The graphic features a background of a wind farm in a desert landscape under a blue sky. On the right side, there is a close-up of a smiling woman wearing an orange headscarf. The text is overlaid on the image in various colors and sizes. At the top left is a circular logo with a globe. At the top right is the 'Sustainable Development Goals' logo. The main text is centered and includes the grant amount, thematic focus, application website, deadline, and a hashtag.

 **Powering the Future We Want** 

UN DESA is offering a US \$1 million grant to fund capacity development activities in energy for sustainable development.

2017 Thematic Focus:
Sustainable Energy for Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World

APPLY TODAY
poweringthefuture.un.org
Deadline 15 June 2017
#poweringthefuture

UN DESA has opened applications for its 2017 Grant on Energy for Sustainable Development. The thematic focus this year is Sustainable Energy for Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World.

“This focus is of great relevance as it addresses critical issues that will help accelerate progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those reflecting the multiple roles that energy plays in eradication of poverty through advancements in health, education, water supply, industrialization and combating climate change, among others,” said UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo.

The 2017 Grant seeks to advance sustainable development by encouraging scientific and technological innovations and fostering leadership initiatives and innovative actions that improve sustainable energy for eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity, while addressing economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Applications are open to individuals, institutions or partnerships based on past and current achievements. Successful recipients should be able to demonstrate leadership and innovation in sustainable energy for eradicating poverty, as well as willingness and ability to implement knowledge transfer through capacity building activities aimed at replicating and scaling up successful experiences and lessons learned.

The Grant carries an award of one million US dollars to fund such capacity building activities.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are accepted online only. To access the online application form, please see <https://poweringthefuture.un.org/apply2/>

For eligibility requirements and selection criteria, please see <https://poweringthefuture.un.org/about/guidelines>

Applications must be submitted in English by **15 June 2017**.

For queries and additional information, please send emails to poweringthefuture@un.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1-5 May, New York	12th Session, United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF11)
8-10 May, New York	2017 Integration Segment of ECOSOC
15-16 May, New York	Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs
22-31 May, New York	2017 Resumed Session of the Committee on NGOs
22-25 May, New York	ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development

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